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*President*: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.*

**Agenda item 47**

**Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters**

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Arabic*): In connection with the item before the Assembly, I should like to remind members that at its 126th plenary meeting of the fiftieth session, held on 16 September 1996, the General Assembly decided that the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council should continue its work, taking into account the progress achieved during the forty-eighth, forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions and the views expressed during the fifty-first session of the Assembly, and should submit a report to the Assembly of its fifty-first session, including any agreed recommendations.

**Mr. Zlenko** (Ukraine): It may be recalled that the representative of Ukraine was the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Today, at the fifty-first session, we have the honour to open the discussion on the same subject, which is the backbone of the issue of United Nations reform. It shows that we have a sincere interest in and are not indifferent to the fate of the United Nations today and in the future.

It is the view of our delegation that a revitalized and reformed United Nations would be impossible without a more representative and open Security Council. Delays in resolving this important matter impair the United Nations ability to respond adequately to the challenges of the present and to enhance the Organization's prestige in contemporary international relations.

The delegation of Ukraine shares the view that, notwithstanding the absence of sound positive results, the previous session of the General Assembly was the most successful so far in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council.

Now, at least, we have a better picture of what is not acceptable to Member States among the schemes to expand the Security Council. The addition of only two countries to permanent membership in the future Council has clearly been ruled out by the Working Group. Equally, the permanent members of the Security Council are not ready to agree to any change in the status of the veto.

Unfortunately, such an outcome is not enough to form the basis for an agreement that could bring us to a breakthrough in resolving the issue.

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What makes the work of the Working Group so ineffective and not focus-oriented?

In our opinion, we are sitting too long at the starting line in the presentation of our national positions. Three years after the Working Group was created, we have not even entered the stage of negotiations. Although there have been a lot of interesting proposals, they have not received adequate responses from delegations. Even the most thorough proposal, that of Italy, does not enjoy even the basic understanding by members of some of its most appealing elements.

In this context, the delegation of Ukraine proposes to restructure the discussions in the Working Group towards initiating an unbiased and thorough debate on each of the proposals presented by Member States. We hope that such an option will help to determine both the merits and the shortcomings of the proposals and will use the constructive elements in the further work of the Working Group.

Another negative factor in our discussion, which we cannot help but mention, is the vague positions of the permanent members of the Security Council, who often prefer to make hints instead of speaking straight. This uncertainty, as we see it, can only be interpreted as an unwillingness to accept any change in the present status of the Security Council. If that is the case, we can only express our regret.

To know better the position of the five on the issue of equitable representation on and the increase in the membership of the Security Council and on other related matters, we would like to request the Secretariat to prepare a working paper that would reflect the relevant positions of the permanent members of the Security Council on all aforementioned issues. We believe that such a paper will be very helpful to many of us, if not to all.

Serious concerns have emerged in connection with certain statements concerning the decision-making process in the Open-ended Working Group. The failure to achieve tangible results is attributed by some to the principle of consensus which we apply here. The delegation of Ukraine avails itself of this opportunity to state clearly that any other way of adopting a decision on the expansion of the Security Council will have the most negative consequences, both political and material, for the future of this Organization. A refusal of the permanent members to support and then to ratify the amendments to the Charter could result in unpredictable political implications as far as the implementation of Security Council resolutions is concerned.

The self-imposed rule of consensus serves our Group as an effective guarantor against such an unfavourable development of events and, in the long run, as a guarantee of the preservation of our Organization as a viable instrument for maintaining international peace and security.

Do we have the potential to reach a compromise? The delegation of Ukraine has no doubts about this. The most persuasive proof to this effect is presented in the report of the Open-ended Working Group. For the first time in three years, the Member States agreed on a substantial part of it, notwithstanding all the differences that still remain.

In our opinion, we should turn to the basic conceptual principle of negotiations: either to negotiate about the goal and reach an agreement or to negotiate about positions and find ourselves on a dead-end street. My delegation believes that we should take step-by-step decisions, each of which would facilitate the adoption of the next one.

At this stage, we believe, the least controversial issue is the number of seats in the expanded Security Council. Using the principle of the lowest common denominator, the Working Group could have taken a decision to expand the Council to 25 or 26 members. My delegation put forward this proposal during the work of our Working Group and would like to reaffirm that it is still on the negotiating table.

One of the positive aspects of such a decision lies in its confidence-building potential. Once assured that the interests of all regional groups have been met, Member States, not afraid of being overwhelmed, would be more inclined to reach an agreement. At the same time, this would make further negotiations more parameter-oriented.

My delegation would like to stress that any expansion of the Security Council should take into account the legitimate interests of the Eastern European regional group, which has more than doubled its membership in recent years. We note with satisfaction that this idea has found its place in the report of the Open-ended Working Group to the General Assembly.

Another basic pillar of the work of the Group should be the strict and faithful observance of the fundamental principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. That is why my delegation is not in a position to support the application of the important principle of equitable geographical distribution to the category of permanent members of the Security Council. The new permanent members, if there should be any, should be chosen on an ad hoc basis, as stipulated by the Charter. Thus, any State which is individually capable of assuming primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and whose candidature is acceptable at both the regional and global levels can become a permanent member of the Security Council through the relevant procedure.

In this context, we think that only Germany and Japan meet the criteria. Ukraine supports the desire of these countries to acquire permanent membership of the Security Council. This process should be accompanied by an increase in the number of non-permanent members, due regard being specially paid, *inter alia*, to equitable geographical distribution.

The goal of the expansion of the Security Council is to make it more representative and balanced and its work more effective and transparent. Obviously, current realities should be properly taken into account. The principle of balance does not permit one group to dominate the other groups of States and encourages States to seek cooperation and agreement in resolving problems. In our opinion, balance in the composition of the Security Council can be reached by an increase in the number of non-permanent members, primarily from the developing countries.

Ukraine believes that, if two additional seats for permanent members in the Security Council are created, the number of non-permanent members should be increased by eight, which would make a total of 18 non-permanent members. The additional seats for non-permanent members could be distributed as follows: four seats for Asian and African countries; two seats for the regional group of Latin American and Caribbean countries; one seat for the regional group of Western European and other countries; and one seat for the regional group of Eastern European countries.

Thus, the Ukrainian proposal may be defined by the formula "2+8". Through our proposal, we can achieve a balance by increasing the representation of developing countries in the Security Council to 13. If the current decision-making procedure is retained, the approval of a decision in the enlarged Council would require 15 votes in favour, provided that none of the permanent members votes against. With 13 votes, the developing countries would have an effective group veto, without leaving the veto as the prerogative of any one State.

As to the status of these new non-permanent seats, Ukraine supports a well-known proposal by Italy. At the same time, to accommodate the interests of small countries, the following modification might be considered. First, regional groups might be given the right to determine how many seats — except one that would stay under the regular two-year rotation rule — would be used for frequent rotation. Secondly, the regional groups might be permitted to use their non-permanent seats — except one that would stay under the regular two-year rotation rule — on a one-year rotation basis.

The position of Ukraine on the veto issue is well known. We consider the existence of the power of veto, under present political realities, to be unjustified. In the framework of the Open-ended Working Group, our delegation voiced its support for the idea of the so-called "diluted veto", as well as for restricted implementation of the veto by the Security Council permanent members. In our opinion, these modifications could have limited the opportunities of the permanent members to use the veto only in their own national interests, to the detriment of the interests of the international community as a whole. But one has to be a realist. We do understand that only the permanent members themselves can abolish or at least modify the right to veto.

In this context, we believe that a speedy solution to the question of the expansion of the Security Council in order to balance its membership will contribute to the voluntary limitation of the use of veto by the permanent members.

The so-called Cluster II issues are an indispensable part of the Security Council reform, but we are deeply convinced that they should not be held hostage to the main issue of enlarging the Council or depend on how that issue will be resolved. My delegation assesses positively all the changes that have occurred in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council and considers it necessary to consolidate them.

Unfortunately, "common sense", as Voltaire once said, "is not so common"; that holds true in the work of our Working Group. Quite often, we see that wisdom

yields to political ambition, thus complicating an issue which is vital for the very existence of our Organization. My delegation strongly believes that, if we want to get along, we have to meet with dignity the new demands and the new challenges facing this Organization and each of its Member States.

**Mr. Sucharipa** (Austria): The General Assembly is considering the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council for the fourth time without, I am afraid, any immediate solution within reach. This fact calls for an urgent reassessment of the objectives contained in resolution 48/26, the basis of our reform exercise.

We have decided to speak early in this year's debate on agenda item 47 not because our immediate national interests are at stake, but because Austria has a long-lasting tradition of supporting a strong United Nations. The issue before us is closely related to our desire to see a healthier Organization getting prepared for the challenges of the next century.

With the adoption of resolution 48/26, the General Assembly recognized the need to review the membership of the Security Council: first, in view of the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially from developing countries; and secondly, in view of the substantial changes in international relations.

At the founding of the United Nations, the ratio of the overall membership of the United Nations to the membership of the Security Council was roughly 6:1. After the 1965 enlargement it was 8:1. The process of decolonization has brought it up to about 12:1. It seems obvious, therefore, that the large increase in the overall membership of the United Nations has to be reflected in the composition of the Security Council, taking into account the criterion of equitable geographical representation. The need for an efficient Council, however, imposes numerical limits. The Working Group unanimously agreed on these principles.

Pursuant to a widely shared view, the current structure of the Council does not reflect the international political and economic changes of recent decades. The Security Council, bearing the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, no longer represents the universality and plurality of its mandators, that is the members of the General Assembly. Lack of representation engenders lack of legitimacy; hence the urgency for Security Council reform.

A large number of Member States highly value the merits of the concept of cohabitation and cooperation between permanent and non-permanent membership as it has evolved over the last five decades. While these countries — and I count Austria among them — favour a balanced enlargement in these existing categories, others concentrate their reform proposals *inter alia* on a modified model for non-permanent membership.

If the reform process is to succeed, we must break out of this well-known dilemma of our discussions in the Open-ended Working Group. And, if I may refer to the statement we have just heard by our colleague from Ukraine, what he proposed could be a step in this direction. At this stage my delegation would like to pay a special tribute to Ambassador Fredrik Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and to Ambassador Asda Jayanama of Thailand for their patience and untiring efforts as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group.

Although the deliberations during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly were substantial, lack of progress persisted, which threatens to turn our serious and ambitious efforts into a "never-ending story". On the occasion of last year's Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly, as well as during this year's general debate, an impressive number of Member States expressed their deep commitment to multilateralism, and to a strong and vital United Nations able to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security in the twenty-first century.

The overall reform process aimed at restructuring and revitalizing, modernizing and updating the Organization in order to equip it for future challenges has to be finally brought to a conclusion. The Security Council cannot be an exception. Reform of the Council is a key element in the overall reform process. Let us, therefore, redouble our efforts in the search for "general agreement" on the reform of the Council as stipulated in the preambular part of resolution 48/26, and let us find the necessary flexibility to meet that goal.

We believe that the following points could constitute the parameters for such general agreement: for reasons of efficiency, any enlargement should not exceed a total of 25 members. In order to safeguard effectiveness, enlargement should take full account of the reality and pluralistic nature of today's world and satisfy the need for equitable geographical representation.

The concept of permanent combined with non-permanent, or elected, membership can provide the necessary continuity in the Security Council's work and an appropriate reflection of the structure of international relations. It can safeguard necessary democratic elements to ensure to a sufficient degree the necessary representative nature of the Council.

Criteria for the choice of permanent members must be political and economic realities, global constructive engagement of the potential candidates, and their capacity and willingness to contribute in an appropriate fashion to the maintenance of international peace and security, in particular through participation in and support of peacekeeping operations. These are general criteria with worldwide relevance. The principle of equitable geographical representation is relevant as well.

For the election of non-permanent members — again based on the principle of geographical representation — the current criteria listed in Article 23 (1) of the Charter should continue to apply.

And, finally, the veto should be limited in scope and in use.

The goal of legitimacy and efficiency for the Security Council not only calls for a higher degree of formalized representation, but also for increased interaction between the members and non-members of the Council. My delegation welcomes the improvements undertaken by the Council in the last two years towards better access to information, *inter alia* in the context of United Nations peacekeeping, and we ask all of its present and future members to assure an appropriate and consistent follow-up to these initial steps. These improvements have to be considered a result of the proposals and debates in the framework of the General Assembly Working Group.

The increase in access to information ought to be supplemented by similar improvements in the possibilities for significant interaction between members and non-members of the Council. Whenever necessary, the views of non-members, especially those immediately concerned with questions dealt with in the Council, should be heard and their articulation encouraged. Here again we have seen progress in recent years, and we hope that this trend will continue.

As a final point, let me stress the importance Austria attaches to efforts aimed at redressing the political imbalance between the General Assembly and the Security Council. Increased relevance of the General Assembly in the decision-making of this Organization is a crucial and essential element of United Nations reform. This goal needs to be pursued with utmost vigour.

To this effect, the proceedings of the General Assembly need to be streamlined. We welcome the first steps in this direction under the leadership of the President of the Assembly.

**The Acting President** (*interpretation from Arabic*): Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed today at 5 p.m.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly agrees to that proposal.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. Eitel** (Germany): The President of the General Assembly will also preside over the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council during the fifty-first session. I wish him and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein and Ambassador Asda Jayanama, good luck in their difficult task. We are glad to see the two Vice-Chairmen again on the job.

Let me begin with a metaphor. For almost four years the United Nations reform train has been waiting in the United Nations central station on the East River to be repaired and overhauled. Passengers outside, in the United Nations country, are waiting for the train to depart and arrive at destinations called Peace and Security, Development, Human Rights and Environmental Protection. They are waiting in places that suffer from internal conflicts, places still marked by poverty or lack of democracy and human rights, and places threatened by destruction of or serious damage to their environment. The United Nations train is the only train in the world that can reach those places.

The train needs competent staff as well as a strong engine in which Member States have confidence. We must therefore replace the old steam locomotive made in 1945 with an up-to-date model engine that pulls the train forward and is, at the same time, easily controlled and adapted to the needs of the passengers waiting at the various stations.

Where do we stand today in our discussion? And second, where do we go from here?

With regard to my first question, in the view of Germany and many other countries, we are ready for concrete negotiations on the reform of the Security Council. The latest report of the Working Group of 13 September 1996 includes all the elements necessary for a reform package, which are the following.

The first element is greater transparency in the working methods of the Security Council, in particular better information for non-members of the Security Council, consultations with present and potential troop-contributing countries and the participation of non-members of the Council in its discussions. During its presidency of the Security Council in August 1996, Germany held extensive daily briefings and several open formal meetings of the Security Council, allowing a broad flow of information between members and non-members of the Security Council. Statements were also made by an observer country and an organization with observer status in a public debate of the Security Council. As President of one of the Sanctions Committees, I gave briefings on its work throughout the year.

The second element is enlargement of both categories of membership, permanent as well as non-permanent. During the last general debate, many Member States referred to Germany as a possible new permanent member. We are grateful for this support, and I wish to express my thanks also to my Ukrainian colleague, who has just "spoken straight". Germany continues to stress that a reform should also provide for permanent membership for the South, that is, three seats for Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, all together. Together with new non-permanent seats, the overall size of a future Security Council should be between 23 and 26, preferably 24. The recent discussions have focused on how to determine who should have access to the three new permanent seats for the South. In this context, we have noticed that quite a number of Member States who have expressed support for the creation of new permanent seats have also mentioned the Italian proposal. This may be understood as a desire to combine the principles of permanent regional representation and rotation, leading to permanent regional rotating seats. This is one possible solution to the problem of selecting permanent members from the three regions I mentioned.

The third element entails adapting the decision-making procedures to the new size and composition of an enlarged and reformed Security Council. The report of the Working Group includes several proposals to this effect which deserve our interest and attention. The German position regarding the so-called action threshold and the veto are well known. It is evident, however, that the scope and configuration of these decision-making procedures are dependent on the political role of the new Security Council. Thus, progress in this area will not only require creative thinking and close negotiation but will also be possible only after the other reform aspects have been resolved.

The fourth and last element is a periodic review. Several countries have proposed a re-examination or a periodical review of the new composition of the Security Council as part of an overall agreement. Germany, in this context, has presented a proposal for a periodic review clause (A/50/47, annex XIV), the details of which are known to participants. The general purpose of this proposal is twofold: to guarantee that neither the increase in membership nor the new composition of the Security Council is irreversible, and thus to facilitate the decision for reform now.

This is where we stand today. Several reform proposals are on the table. Where do we go from here?

First, we must prepare a Security Council reform package based on the now existing proposals. After excluding the proposals that have been proven to be too unrealistic or that have provoked only obvious silence on the part of the membership, the remaining proposals should merge into a reform package on which a general agreement of the membership can be reached.

Secondly, progress will only be possible by way of concrete political negotiation. While the Working Group will continue its work, the membership must remain mindful of the reform mandate and enter into concrete negotiations that lead to decisions. These decisions will have to be taken according to the provisions and requirements for amendments stipulated in the Charter. All of us will work for the largest possible majority, but it would be unrealistic to expect decisions on the basis of a 100 per cent consensus.

Thirdly, we must not forget other reform areas. The financial situation of the United Nations, the Agenda for Development, the Agenda for Peace and the strengthening of the United Nations system as a whole are equally at the centre of ongoing reform efforts. Germany shares the view of other countries that the lack

of tangible progress with regard to the reform of the Security Council

> "has an adverse effect on the negotiations on all other aspects of the Organization's future activities." *(A/50/47/Add. l, annex XVIII, para. 1)*

Fourthly, the time to act is now. Let me quote the outgoing President of the General Assembly and previous Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral:

> "[The] Member States ... now must deliver.... The issues cannot just be endlessly debated. There must be action, and there must be action soon." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 128th meeting, p. 7)*

The General Assembly, with its principle of one State, one vote, will have the final word on the composition, transparency and effectiveness of the United Nations train into the twenty-first century, on its destinations and on its schedule.

The passengers have been waiting long enough.

**Mr. Amorim** (Brazil): I should like to start by thanking Ambassadors Breitenstein and Jayanama for their competent Vice-Chairmanship during the past year of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, and by placing on record our appreciation of the leadership provided by Professor Freitas do Amaral as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We are convinced that our current President, Ambassador Razali Ismail, will contribute his well-known dynamism and lucidity to our future work.

The Working Group continues to inspire heated debates and stimulate profound reflection on an issue that is central to the future of the Organization. The Working Group's report to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session can be described as a satisfactory summary of its recent activity, even though, given the rule of consensus, it understandably omits important details and falls short of reflecting certain trends. It nevertheless stands as a useful tool to enable work to proceed towards a widely acceptable blueprint for equitable Council reform.

As the Brazilian Minister for External Relations, Luiz Felipe Lampreia, stated in the general debate,

> "There is a virtual consensus that the Security Council should be enlarged to allow for greater participation by countries with the capacity to act on a global scale and the willingness to bear the responsibilities that would entail. We must now set a course for this process. Its outcome is essential for strengthening the United Nations." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 4th meeting, p. 4)*

At the same time, we share with many a sense of disappointment at the General Assembly's inability to go further than it did during its fiftieth session in setting the stage for Security Council reform. The United Nations cannot face the future with confidence as long as the composition of the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security is not made equitable and representative.

Reference has been made here to the fact that the Charter does not speak of equitable geographic distribution in dealing with the issue of permanent members. However, if we consider the work of those who wrote the Charter in 1945, we must conclude that they also had in mind the idea of equitable geographic distribution. Since most of Africa was at that time still under colonial rule, Latin America was the only region that was excluded — the result of a specific fact to which I may refer on another occasion.

We must be wary of the risks involved in failing to act. But we must be even more careful not to mistake the need for equitable representation in an expanded Security Council with forms of expansion that will make it neither representative nor equitable and that, instead of taking us closer to those objectives, may, on the contrary, lead us in the opposite direction.

The Working Group has already reached the conclusion that

> "In the event that there is agreement for an increase in the permanent membership, an increase only by industrialized countries would be widely regarded as unacceptable". *(A/50/47, para. 26)*

However, despite the fact that this conclusion may be taken as a welcome sign of wisdom, other ideas are still lurking in the background — sometimes even in the foreground — which, though disguised, would have the same practical effect of aggravating the existing imbalance.

Prolonged discussions in the Working Group exposed the inherent flaws in proposals that conceived of a regional process for the selection of permanent members from some quarters while exempting two industrialized countries from the same type of selection procedure. The attempted justification for such ideas remains unconvincing. It is said, for example, that there seems to be a lack of agreement in three regions with regard to who should occupy the corresponding permanent seats. Nothing is said of the regional situation of the two particular industrialized countries, although some of the strongest opposition to the idea of permanent membership is to be found precisely in their parts of the world.

In our view, the concept of "equitable representation" certainly encompasses the idea of equitable geographic or regional representation. However, it also has other connotations. A body of such limited composition and wide-ranging powers as the Security Council must be perceived as legitimate, and for that to be the case it must include, as permanent members, a sample of Member States that is broadly seen as representative of different perspectives.

We believe that the regional component must be kept in mind in any plan for reform, but not as a pretext for establishing inequities at the outset of the reform process, in contravention of our very mandate. The selective application of regional procedures for identifying new permanent members, to which I have just referred, is a case in point.

Logically, the so-called regional permanent seat — whether as its rotating variant or in some other guise — might have an operational meaning in parts of the world where integration in the fields of foreign policy and defence has advanced substantially. However, if the one region of the world where this is already happening does not feel ready to embrace the regional permanent seat for itself, it is doubtful whether there is a legitimate basis for encouraging others to do so.

Furthermore, care should be taken not to confound the informal regional groupings of the United Nations system with regional bodies in the field of international affairs. Let us not forget that the establishment of a common foreign or security policy only comes about, if at all, as one of the last stages in any process of regional integration. Perhaps we will head towards an interregional world with a higher standard of understanding among Governments and peoples in the future; that is certainly desirable. If — or when — that happens, a revision of the basis for representation in the Security Council would be in order. However, for the time being, the truth is that we still live and work in an inter-State world — at least as far as cooperation for the maintenance of peace and security is concerned. The current permanent members of the Security Council have given no indication whatsoever that they think otherwise.

It is impossible to discuss last year's report without taking due note of the wide support expressed in the Working Group for proposals to limit the scope and use of the veto. We sympathize with many such proposals, in particular those submitted by countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, and with the interesting suggestions by the delegations of Uruguay and Mexico referred to in paragraph 31 of document A/50/47. At the same time, we recognize that these proposals have met with some resistance, in particular on the part of the existing permanent members.

In Working Group discussions I alluded to an idea that I believe could help to discourage resort to the veto without abridging the current rights of permanent members. This would allow permanent members to cast negative votes in the same way as non-permanent members cast them: without blocking decisions. Were the Council's permanent members granted such a faculty, it would offer new possibilities for self-restraint, not by limiting their prerogatives but by giving them an additional option that, strictly speaking, they do not enjoy. They would still be entitled to vote in favour of or to abstain on a resolution, or to veto it. But in addition, they would be entitled to vote against without vetoing, in the same way as the non-permanent members have done for more than 50 years. It would be like allowing someone who is used to being chauffeur-driven around town in a comfortable private limousine the right to use public transportation. It could not do any harm, and would probably have some constructive repercussions. This idea is certainly not a panacea, and does not address all concerns, but it may be worth considering.

To my delegation, as well as to many others involved in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group, the democratization of the United Nations stands out as a priority. If the Security Council is to shape a peaceful world order capable of honouring the principles of the Charter, its decisions must be perceived as legally sound and politically wise. Its work must meet the required standards of accountability expected of governmental institutions in democratic regimes. The global responsibilities entrusted to the permanent and

non-permanent members of the Council cannot be subject to narrow-mindedness.

These considerations apply to all the Council's activities, but acquire greater significance with respect to the authorization of coercive measures, even when they do not involve the use of force. The political nature of the Council's work does not entitle it to treat considerations of a legal nature with laxity. The need for urgent action cannot justify persistent improvisation. The time has perhaps come for a critical assessment of Council action since the end of the cold war, with a view to identifying the cases where decisions did not contribute to preserving the credibility of the United Nations, as well as to looking at alternative approaches capable not only of preserving but, if possible, enhancing the Organization's image as an impartial broker for peace. In this context, discussions such as the ones pursued in the General Assembly on the Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace" can be considered a healthy exercise to be further stimulated.

The President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Mohammed Bedjaoui, has made an important contribution in this regard, in his book entitled *The New World Order and the Security Council: Testing the Legality of its Acts*. We concur in particular with his prescription for future Council activity when he states that:

> "The task is to subject the use of force to ever more rigorous discipline, to confirm and develop the rules which fortify just recourse to it, to eliminate the practices which lead it astray and to endow such recourse with the respect and recognition it inevitably arouses when it serves to found order upon justice." *(The New World Order and the Security Council: Testing the Legality of its Acts, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995, page 6)*

We need an Organization with a balanced and solid institutional architecture. The relationship between the General Assembly, a restructured Security Council and a revitalized Economic and Social Council is of fundamental importance as we become increasingly aware of the mutually reinforcing interlinkage between peace, development and democracy in all its aspects. The International Court of Justice is also an essential part of our edifice. A number of questions related to peace and security do not fit exclusively within the Security Council's area of competence. They can be treated either elsewhere or in cooperation with other organs. The General Assembly, in particular, should be in close touch with the Council's activity. As a small step in that direction, I would suggest that the President of the General Assembly be invited to participate in the monthly luncheon given by the President of the Security Council for the Permanent Representatives of Council members along with the Secretary-General.

In an article published last month, Mr. Paul Kennedy, a British historian working at Yale University commented that:

> "The end of the cold war has made much of world politics unfamiliar, messy and difficult to assess".

But he also argued that the challenges facing the world today are not really greater than those confronting world leaders in the chaos of 1945. He concluded that the world is in need of leadership and that world leaders should have the foresight to make the Security Council representative. His article only provides us with one more incentive to continue to participate actively in the promotion of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, as an indispensable element in the effort to strengthen multilateralism as part of our larger endeavour to build a United Nations capable of facing the challenges of the twenty-first century.

**Mr. Fulci** (Italy): Allow me to start with a brief sketch of where we stand after three years of deliberations on the question of the expansion of the Security Council. First of all, there will be no quick fix. Everyone, including its potential beneficiaries, agrees that the quick fix has no future. As for the "2+3" proposal, it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to select one African, one Asian, and one Latin American or Caribbean country for a permanent seat. Moreover, one of the permanent members has already made it abundantly clear that it would block any Charter amendment granting the veto to developing countries.

This leaves us with three main options: first, the "2+3 regional permanent rotating seats" and its variants; secondly, the Italian proposal to establish 10 new non-permanent seats for the more frequent rotation of 30 countries to be chosen by the General Assembly; and thirdly, the fall-back position of the Non-Aligned Movement to increase only non-permanent seats, for the time being, in case no agreement is reached on other categories of membership. Let us look at these options one by one.

The first formula, "2+3 regional permanent rotating seats" ran into some lively opposition when it was discussed last spring in the Open-ended Working Group. Some representatives dubbed it a quick fix by the back door. To me, it looked like a Trojan horse: open it up, and out jump two new permanent members, Germany and Japan. We were also brought back to our logical senses on this particular point by our Brazilian colleague, who spoke before me, when he reminded us that we are the United Nations, not the "United Regions".

We thought that the sun had set on this proposal, but to our surprise it was reincarnated this September in the form of a draft resolution circulated to an Asian capital and through the corridors of the United Nations. This latest version carries the proviso that it would be up to the three continents, Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, to decide how often, how many and which of their respective countries would be the beneficiaries of these regional permanent rotating seats. In fact, this text would immediately grant permanent seats to two large industrialized countries. The under-represented continents, meanwhile, would be led into an endless, intractable dispute over the criteria and modalities for utilizing the seats assigned to them — assigned only on paper, of course. Frankly, we do not see how such a plan can be accepted. No one — I repeat, no one — is so naive as to buy a compromise that would give immediate advantages to two countries and only a long-term credit to their counterparts. Furthermore as was just mentioned the establishment of regional permanent rotating seats would introduce two double standards at the United Nations. The first would affect two regional groups — the Western European and Other States, and the Eastern Europe States — which would be excluded from the rotation. The second double standard would affect all of us, since the hypothetical global superiority of certain countries would be treated as a foregone conclusion. But then where do we draw the line between countries that are economic global Powers and countries that are not?

Let us face another fact of life. Veto power will not be granted to two self-appointed "global Powers" unless it is simultaneously accorded to developing countries — a possibility that has, as I said earlier, been ruled out by one permanent member. Therefore, should this scenario prevail, the States Members of the United Nations would be divided into four categories: category A, the five current permanent members, with veto power; category B, two new permanent members, Germany and Japan, but without veto power, at least for the time being; category C, a certain number of countries, depending on how many are eventually chosen from the three developing continents — also without the veto, of course — that would occupy the three regional permanent seats on a rotating basis and probably forgo the test of democratic elections; and category D — all the rest of us, who would have to continue to compete fiercely for the non-permanent seats, which would increase in number only slightly. I refer here to 165 or 170 countries, large and small, major and minor contributors to the budget, active participants and non-participants in peacekeeping operations, and so on. As I said, the United Nations would end up with four categories of membership. Now what kind of equality is that?

Many of us have already noted that the expression "permanent rotating", semantically speaking, is a contradiction in terms. If a seat is permanent, it does not rotate. If it rotates, it is not permanent. Yet the authors of this terminology have touted it as "constructive ambiguity". With all due respect, it sounds to us more like "destructive ambiguity". It would destroy democracy, since it would violate the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in our Charter. It would destroy justice, making the Security Council even more elitist than it is now. It would curtail one of the General Assembly's main powers: the right to democratically elect by secret ballot and by a two-thirds majority no fewer than two thirds of the Security Council members — 10 out of the present 15.

Let us learn from history; in 1926, the decline of the League of Nations was set into motion, at least in part, by an increase in its permanent membership.

Turning now to the second option — the Italian proposal — I should like first sincerely to thank the countries that have manifested their interest or support. We are heartened by the growing momentum that is building behind it. During the recent general debate, 29 countries expressly mentioned the Italian proposal, many of them for the first time. That number is on a par with the number of delegations that mentioned granting permanent seats to Germany and Japan. All in all, since the beginning of the exercise on Security Council reform, 77 — I repeat, 77 — countries have publicly supported the Italian formula or shown interest in it per se or as a fall-back position.

The Italian proposal addresses and reconciles the two major changes that have occurred on the international scene since the end of the Second World War: first, the

emergence of a group of countries with considerable economic and political capacities, including Italy, which by 1 January 1998 will be the fifth largest contributor to the United Nations budget; and secondly, the emergence of the developing countries, which are far more numerous and important today than they were in 1965, when the Security Council was enlarged.

It is a fact that over the past 50 years, several medium- to large-sized countries have been elected to the Council more frequently than others. It is also a fact that 77 countries, including some founding Members, have never — never — been elected to the Council, while 44 have been elected only once; in other words, for two thirds of the general membership, participation in the Security Council has either been completely blocked or severely limited. Under the Italian proposal, these States would have a far more concrete chance of being elected to the Security Council, since they would be shielded from the competition of the "big brothers" in their respective regional groups. As for the medium- to large-sized countries, whose rivalry for seats has, as we witnessed last week, grown more heated and divisive with each passing year, our proposal aims to bring more harmony and less bitterness to the elections.

Last but not least, the Italian proposal aims to strengthen the role of the General Assembly, which is and must remain the bedrock of our Organization. Since all non-permanent members, whether frequently or regularly rotating, would have to stand for democratic election, the General Assembly's power within the United Nations system would be maintained and even strengthened.

As to the impact of Security Council reform on the financial situation, time and again we have heard that the reward for handing over two permanent seats to two great economic Powers would be an influx of fresh cash into United Nations coffers. However, the financial situation could also be improved through the Italian proposal, and not at the immense cost of granting perpetual, irreversible seats to two nations.

Consider the financing of peacekeeping operations. Currently the permanent members pay the same share for peacekeeping as they do for the regular budget, plus a surcharge of approximately 20 per cent. One argument that has been made in favour of granting permanent seats to Germany and Japan is that their payment of such a surcharge would increase the resources available to the peacekeeping budget. But the Italian proposal has a notable advantage in this respect. It would distribute the burden among a larger number of countries — 30 rather than 2 — since more frequently rotating States would also have to pay a surcharge of 10 per cent, half the ratio paid by permanent members. This would also decrease the Organization's dependence on the contributions and on the whims of two or three countries, and help to reduce the contribution of the less-developed countries. In the long term it might even lead to a reassessment of the surcharge paid by permanent members.

The third proposal on the table is the fall-back position of the Non-Aligned Movement:

> "If there is no agreement on other categories of membership, expansion should take place only, for the time being, in the non-permanent category." *(A/49/965, annex 9, para. 5)*

This proposal follows in the footsteps of the first, and so far only, successful reform of the Security Council in 1965, when four non-permanent seats were added. I have a very simple question: If it worked then, why should it not work now?

Recent voting results have led to speculation that the Non-Aligned Movement is losing its traditional unity and clout. In my opinion, this is a serious miscalculation. Those of us who were invited to Cartagena witnessed the impressive solidarity of the Non-Aligned Movement countries on general and specific issues. The Non-Aligned Movement fall-back position for the enlargement of the Security Council can count on a large base: 113 members in the General Assembly — almost the exact majority needed to approve a proposal for an amendment to the Charter of the United Nations.

Italy remains convinced of the validity of its own proposal; but, as Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini said to the General Assembly one month ago, we are also prepared to accept another formula that would be consistent with the fundamental principles of our proposal — the principles of democracy, equitable geographic representation, effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. We remain firmly opposed to the granting of new permanent seats in any way, style or form.

The Non-Aligned Movement position is animated by the same spirit as the Italian proposal and has a similar orientation. It could represent a first step towards future solutions, while instantly making available additional elective seats, for which all of us could freely compete. The new seats should be allotted to every regional group.

It should not be hard to reach an agreement on the exact number, since we all want a manageable, effective and efficient Security Council.

As to the amendment procedure, we would simply have to follow in the footsteps of the 1963 enlargement, when only two small amendments to the Charter were necessary: one on the number of non-permanent seats, the other on the new majority needed to adopt a resolution.

After three years of intensive work, our inability to reach an agreement on the enlargement of the Security Council could damage the image of our Organization, and this at a time when the United Nations is already being criticized. But we simply cannot, and should not, accept the status quo. That is why we must proceed, with full respect for the principles of openness and transparency. In this endeavour our best guarantee for success is, first and foremost, the objectivity and impartiality of our new President, Mr. Razali Ismail, as well as his determination and experience.

We are at a fork in the road. One path leads to new permanent seats, the other to new elective seats. One brings us back to more discrimination, elitism and inequity. The other takes us forward to greater democracy, participation and justice. It is up to us, and us alone, to decide; but whether we like it or not, even as we speak the future is charting the course we must follow. One hundred and fifty years ago, that great political scientist, Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote that democracy, which shuts the past against us, opens the future before us.

**Mr. Hasmy** (Malaysia): In recent years, the General Assembly, through the Open-ended Working Group, has worked with renewed intensity towards a Security Council restructured both in form and content. The challenge of change must be met, even if a comprehensive solution has not so far been found. This session is critical in our collective efforts to find the answer.

After three years of intensive deliberations, no concrete progress has been made. Nonetheless, the global momentum towards reform must be maintained and enhanced. The tireless efforts of the three consecutive Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group and the co-Vice-Chairmen therefore deserve our full appreciation.

There is universal acknowledgement, both within the Assembly and outside it, that the membership of the Security Council should be expanded and its working methods, including the use of the veto, modified and changed. Failure to do so will undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of the Security Council. The Council can no longer be viewed through the prism of the victors of the Second World War. It cannot ignore the fact that, today, it is answerable to 185 Member States and not just 51, as it was at the inception of the Organization.

Expansion must take account of the legitimate interests of Member States, especially of those that are disadvantaged. The Council cannot remain nor become the permanent abode exclusively of the rich and powerful.

Malaysia maintains that expansion should take place in both categories of Council membership — permanent and non-permanent. Given the increasingly important role of regionalism in inter-State relations, as well as its recognition in the Charter itself, Malaysia and a number of other countries have advocated the concept of permanent regional representation. Let me restate here that that concept attempts to reflect today's reality and to take advantage of the diverse and accelerating developments that have helped boost confidence among the countries of the regions. Furthermore, the role of regionalism in global peace, security and development has blossomed. Permanent representation of a region on the Security Council, based on a mechanism to be worked out and agreed upon by members of that particular region, should become an alternative to what is essentially the nineteenth- century model of great-Power politics that has determined the present structure and composition of the Security Council.

Instead of continuing to be caught up in a log-jam with no solution in sight, the concept of permanent regional representation offers a practical alternative and a viable model for the future structure of the Security Council. The concept essentially seeks to address the need for equitable and balanced geographical representation wherein permanent seats are allocated to each of the developing regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean and not to individual countries. Under that concept, the industrialized countries are conceived of as an identifiable region. The regional representatives, selected by their respective regions on the basis of criteria consistent with the relevant provisions of the Charter, shall exercise all the rights enjoyed by the other permanent members.

The African Group has proposed two permanent seats for Africa. If the other two developing regions and the industrialized groups are given two seats each, there

would be an additional eight permanent seats. The increase in permanent seats must be complemented by an expansion in the number of non-permanent seats, especially for regions that currently do not have sufficient membership. This would make a Council of 27 members, which is relatively small in comparison to the whole of the membership of the Organization today. Such a composition takes into account the need for the Council to function effectively and in an efficient manner. The concept of permanent regional representation, as well as others put forward along similar lines, such as the African common position and permanent regional rotating seats, should not be set aside but should rather be treated with the seriousness that they deserve.

The continued existence of the veto in the Security Council has made that body, whose decisions have global reach and implications, a blatant instrument of the foreign policies of the permanent members. Instead of safeguarding the global interests of peace and security, the use of the veto or the threat of its use can only serve to promote the national agendas of the individual permanent members. As a result, the basic needs and interests of the general membership are often compromised. While explicit exercise of the veto has declined since the end of the cold war, the threat of its use has often been exploited by the permanent members, thereby creating imbalances in the decisions and actions of the Council. Furthermore, the veto negates the principles of democracy and the sovereign equality of States, and its use, as has often been proved in the past, prevents the Council from fulfilling the will of the international community. For these reasons, Malaysia has consistently declared that the veto power in the Security Council is undemocratic and anachronistic and we have consistently called for its abolition.

While recognizing the difficulties, and the reality that the permanent members would not give up their privilege of absolute power in the Council, we believe that, at the least, the use of the veto should be rationalized and the present voting system in the Council modified. A mechanism should therefore be established that would ensure that a single veto could not prohibit the majority in the Council from making a decision or pronouncement. Its scope should be restricted solely to enforcement measures under Chapter VII of the Charter. A proposal on the question of the veto has been put forward by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and is contained in annex VII of document A/50/47/Add.1 of 9 September 1996. Enough has been said during our deliberations on this question over the past three years. Our only hope now is to see the permanent members recognize the fact and be more forthcoming instead of continuing to adopt a dogmatic approach. Only then could substantive progress in all aspects of Council reform be made.

Similarly, adequate suggestions have been put forward by various delegations with regard to the question dealing with the working methods of the Security Council. Those suggestions were not made for the sake of making comments or throwing unnecessary criticism at the Council, but were aimed at ensuring the transparency, accountability and legitimacy of that body. My delegation fully subscribes to the proposals made by the Non-Aligned Movement as contained in General Assembly document A/49/965 of 18 September 1995. The effective functioning of the United Nations could be further enhanced through improved networking between its principal organs. The relationship between the Security Council and the general membership of the United Nations in the General Assembly could be enhanced through regular consultations between their respective Presidents or through wide consultations with concerned parties, including regional organizations.

These proposals were developed further by other delegations in the course of the Working Group's deliberations at the last session of the General Assembly. We cannot deny that some measures have been adopted by the Security Council, but they should not be tentative or provisional. Instead, they should be further enhanced and institutionalized.

In my delegation's assessment, the questions of decision-making, in particular the veto and that of the working methods of the Council, are the areas that could be resolved without a need for any further deliberations. Numerous proposals have been made, but it is clear to my delegation that they will not lead to any conclusion unless there is both flexibility and political will on the part of the permanent members.

Another related aspect of the Council reform pertains to the so-called "cascade effect". Even in the absence of Charter provisions, the five permanent members of the Council have been permanent members in other principal organs of the United Nations. My delegation cannot find any basis for such automatic membership. It is certainly not the right or prerogative of the five, as they have claimed. In keeping with the democratization of the United Nations systems and in upholding the principle of the sovereign equality of States, the automatic membership of the permanent members of the Council in other organs or bodies of the

United Nations should be reviewed as soon as possible. The permanent members' automatic elections to those organs should not be taken for granted and, in other organs of this Organization where they serve, they must share the responsibilities of membership and not insist on membership while refusing to discharge their responsibilities.

Finally, my delegation wishes to acknowledge the importance of the ideas and inputs that non-governmental organizations and academic society can contribute to the work of the Working Group. Their involvement would benefit our work as we move forward to resolve this important matter. Such involvement would, of course, be without prejudice to the whole issue, which we believe should be finally determined by the intergovernmental processes. We do hope that the Working Group will devote some meetings to hearing the views and receiving the inputs of these groups, which are rich in ideas on the reform the Council.

**Mr. Wlosowicz** (Poland): The international community today seems to have no doubt as to the need to reform the Security Council. There is widespread agreement that this reform should be instituted in order to respond adequately to the dramatic changes in international relations. Its principal aim should be to enhance the ability of the Security Council to fulfil its main responsibility under the Charter: to maintain international peace and security.

At its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided to establish an Open-ended Working Group to consider the questions related to the reform of the Security Council. Although the results of the Group's work so far have fallen short of the cherished expectations of the majority of United Nations Members, it must be noted that considerable progress has been made on some aspects of the subject with which this body was charged. For the first time, the Working Group managed to produce a comprehensive report which covers the whole spectrum of issues related to the Security Council. It is a clear indication that discussions on the reform of the Council by the Working Group went beyond the presentation by United Nations Member States of their general positions and reached a new stage: the in-depth analysis of proposed solutions.

The deliberations of the Working Group have also had an impact upon the working methods of the Security Council. In this regard, we note that non-members' access to information about the proceedings of the Security Council has been improved through, among other things, regular briefings by the Council's President. It is worth noting as well that the recent and increasingly frequent practice of convening open orientation debates of the Security Council with the participation of interested States not only has enhanced the transparency of the Council's proceedings; but has also helped the United Nations Members in general to express their views on the issues under consideration by the Council. Transparency has also been enhanced in the field of peacekeeping operations following the statement made by the Council President on 28 March 1996 concerning the amendments to the procedures of meetings of troop-contributing countries. My delegation was one of those which proposed these changes.

Yet in spite of the progress already accomplished by the Working Group, a considerable divergence of views, even on the most important aspects of Security Council reform, still lingers among Member States and the prospects for compromise are still fairly remote. For this reason, we are convinced that the most important task before Member States is an arduous attempt to surmount their differences. We believe that, at present, the Working Group should focus on the search for compromise solutions, however difficult this search might prove. With this in mind we note that we would pleased to see the mandate of the Working Group extended.

Poland is ready to make its contribution to the search for mutually acceptable solutions. We believe that, at this critical juncture, it is imperative to display maximum flexibility and readiness for compromise. For our part, we have carefully analyzed our position in the light of the views expressed so far in the discussions and we will soon present our considerations in the form of an informal position paper, which will elaborate on our previously presented views concerning the most important aspects of the Security Council's future, including one of the most difficult among them: the issue of the size of the Council and the allocation of newly created seats.

At this stage I would like to focus on one point. We believe that the solution concerning the size of the Council is to expand it to between 21 and 25 members. While we are most favourably considering various ideas concerning increased representation for other regional groups, we have to state quite clearly that any enlargement of the Security Council should also result in augmented representation for Eastern Europe, a region in which the number of States has more than doubled in recent years. We cannot go along with any formula

which would, directly or indirectly, imply a discriminatory stance towards the Eastern European Group and in which all other regions would get a share in the extension. Having already endorsed the entirely justified aspirations of Germany and Japan to permanent membership in the Security Council, we also support an enhanced representation of the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America in both categories of membership of the Council.

I would like to return for a moment to the important issue of improving the Security Council's working methods. Although in the earlier part of my statement I pointed to some progress that has been made in this field, it seems evident to my delegation that a lot still remains to be done and that efforts should be continued, especially with regard to transparency and the availability of information about the work of the Security Council to the membership at large. Judging by our experience as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we are of the view that discussion of the working methods of the Security Council, in addition to emphasizing improvements to the link between the Security Council and the United Nations general membership, should focus on, among other things, further developing the cooperative character of the Security Council's proceedings and the process of executing its decisions. It should also focus on more harmonious cooperation between the Council — as the body carrying primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security — and the regional arrangements referred to in Article 52 of the Charter.

We believe that improvements in the working methods should constitute a continuous task for the Council. They can be implemented, as was the case in the past, without necessarily waiting for the formal completion of the Working Group's work.

In conclusion, let me again stress the importance we attach to the reform of the Security Council. We believe that this reform is one of the central elements in the effort to strengthen and reinvigorate the entire system of the United Nations.

**Mr. Tello** (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: For the third consecutive year, the General Assembly has before it a report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council established by resolution 48/26.

In the recent general debate, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country, Angel Gurría Treviño, stated:

> "Mexico considers it essential that in evaluating the proposals before us, account should be taken of the need for that organ's composition to reflect the increase in the membership of the Organization, while strictly respecting the wishes of the countries of each region and the principle of equitable geographical distribution". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 13th meeting, p. 15)*

The report we are now examining is a faithful reflection of what took place in the Group, and makes it clear that, despite the general conviction of the need to enlarge the Security Council, major differences still separate us on fundamental issues. I intend to focus on the very limited areas of convergence that exist, particularly with respect to the composition of the future Council and the need to limit the scope and exercise of the right of veto.

In the first place, in paragraph 26 of its report the Working Group rejected what is known as the "quick fix", which involves admitting as permanent members only the two developed countries that have so requested insistently. With this affirmation, the most discriminatory formula among all those that have been put forward has been discarded. In addition, paragraph 29 of the report specifically refers to the proposal of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to the effect that:

> "in case of no agreement on the increase of other categories of membership, expansion should take place only, for the time being, in the non-permanent category". *(A/50/47, para. 29)*

Let us not forget that this position reflects the view of a very significant group of countries, almost two-thirds of the Members of the United Nations.

Lastly, paragraph 31 of the report reflects the widespread support for the idea of limiting the right of veto, an excessive privilege enjoyed by the five permanent members. It should come as no surprise, and indeed did not surprise us, that the only strong opposition to changing this situation has come from precisely those five countries.

As will be recalled, we began the discussions in the Working Group with great enthusiasm in January 1994. We thought at that time that the international community was in a position to design a Security Council that would reflect the circumstances of today's world, so different from those in which it was created in 1945. We set ourselves the goal of strengthening the functioning of the organ to which we, the States Members of the United Nations, have delegated the delicate responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. We recognized that the task of reforming the Security Council should be based on the principle of sovereign equality of Members of the United Nations, on equitable geographical distribution and on contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. We also reiterated at that time the need to transform the Council into a more transparent, more representative, more legitimate and more efficient instrument, capable of facing the new challenges.

We considered that the end of the cold war offered a unique opportunity to correct defects and imbalances in the composition and working methods of the Security Council. Reality very quickly frustrated our hopes for genuine reform. We saw with great disappointment that, contrary to the original spirit, there were some who had the intention, precisely, of accentuating the inequalities and extending the privileges to others.

The discussions in the Working Group were deadlocked practically from the outset by the claims of a small number of countries which, on the basis of reasons that were never convincing, requested admission to the privileged group.

As is well known, Mexico sees no justification whatsoever for increasing the number of permanent members. We have said, and we repeat it here now, that the five we currently have are more than enough.

We do not understand how at the same time as the validity of the fundamental principle of sovereign equality embodied in the Charter is being reiterated, efforts are being made to increase the number of countries enjoying special rights and privileges.

How can we speak of the need to take equitable geographical distribution into account if, as a result of the exercise, we are faced with a Council in which a single geographical group would have four permanent members? How can we believe that the Council's effectiveness would be increased by giving more countries the power to prevent the adoption of its decisions?

We all know that the composition and working methods of the Security Council are not an example of democracy. How then can we pretend to correct this shortcoming by increasing the number of its permanent members?

The political realities of 1945, we must not forget, compelled us to accept that five of the founding Members of the United Nations should enjoy exceptional privileges, thus constituting an exception to one of the cornerstones on which our Organization rests. We do not believe that the contradiction should be repeated now by increasing the number of those who are beyond the general rule.

Like other countries, Mexico submitted a proposal that could help to move the negotiations forward. With flexibility, in a constructive spirit and, I venture to say, with ingenuity, in May 1995 we put forward for the Working Group's consideration a formula that could constitute the basis for a solution. Nevertheless, all our efforts have as yet been of no avail in the face of the insistence on the part of those who consider that they have superior merits and are asking us to go back to times we thought already behind us rather than to move forward towards an Organization prepared to face the challenges of the twenty-first century, as is the wish of the vast majority of Member States.

In a new attempt to unlock the negotiations, proposals have recently been surfacing for the establishment of rotating permanent regional seats, as already referred to by other speakers. As they have indicated, the very term "rotating permanent" embodies an inevitable semantic, logical and real contradiction. Clearly, if something is permanent, it cannot be rotating, since the latter necessarily implies periodic and continuing change.

At the same time, we need to bear very much in mind that the establishment of this alleged new category is in fact nothing, I repeat nothing, new. It is precisely the current system. For example, under the existing arrangement, two rotating seats are permanently, I repeat permanently, assigned to my region, Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, they are occupied by Chile and Honduras. Two years ago, they were occupied by Brazil and Argentina. The same applies in the case of other regions. Indonesia and the Republic of Korea were elected to the two seats permanently assigned to the Asian Group. Two years ago, these seats were occupied by Pakistan and Oman. In the case of the Western European and other States, Italy and Germany were

elected to the two seats permanently assigned to that Group. Two years ago, those seats were occupied by Spain and New Zealand. The same scheme applies to Africa and Eastern Europe.

Thus this apparently innovative suggestion is nothing other than the current system disguised under a new name. In order to understand what is behind this initiative, we should like to know whom it affects in each region: in other words, which countries in each region would have the right to participate in the rotation; how often, that is to say, how many years they would occupy the seat; and what privileges these new seats would carry with them, that is, whether they would have the right of veto or not. We hope the sponsors of this proposal will clarify these questions in due course.

My delegation, which has participated constructively in the discussions of the Working Group, regrets that the claims of a very small number of countries have prevented us from making progress towards a viable solution. Accordingly, we urge those who are seeking a status contrary to the spirit of the Charter to abandon their anachronistic ambitions, which are in any case very far from enjoying the support of the 124 countries necessary for the two-thirds majority referred to in Article 108 of the Charter. We believe that the time has come to make an honest choice between what is impossible and what is feasible.

My delegation is in favour of the continuation of the work of the Working Group in 1997. That is because we are convinced that with a serious and realistic attitude it is possible to achieve a reform which, as President Zedillo said in this same hall,

> "is respectful of the purposes and principles that gave birth to the Organization, a reform that ensures a more democratic, transparent and efficient system, better equipped to forge a future of peace". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 36th meeting, p. 17)*

**Mr. Minoves-Triquell** (Andorra) *(interpretation from French)*: Allow me to address this Assembly briefly today in order to reiterate the interest of my State, the Principality of Andorra, in the process of reforming and enlarging the United Nations Security Council. Since my country was admitted to the United Nations in 1993, Andorra has been guided by the Charter in evaluating possibilities for reform of that organ, and especially by the spirit inherent in the words

> "We the peoples of the United Nations determined ... to reaffirm faith ... in the equal rights ... of nations large and small".

Within the Working Group on that subject, we have carefully followed the discussions on the right of veto, the possible increase in the membership of permanent or non-permanent members, and the possible new characteristics for these categories. Being one of the youngest Members of the United Nations entails maintaining a certain reserve, even modesty, in the approach to be adopted when faced with a problem as complex as the reform of a vital organ of our Organization. Nevertheless, we spoke out when we thought that more transparency was needed in the activities of the Security Council or when the size of States was to be taken into consideration for possible membership of the Council. The principle of sovereign equality of States, large and small, strong and weak, embodied in Article 2.1 of the Charter, underlies the very concept of the United Nations and we will not cease to defend it.

Until now the number of proposals for reform has been very great. Some States have argued in favour of increasing the two categories of members. Others, such as Italy, propose that we only increase the number of non-permanent members. Many ideas have been expressed as to how to choose the members, that is, should we decide on regional or subregional rotation and try to determine whether certain States should have seats in the Council more frequently than other States? At the same time, we have seen a concern emerge that the effectiveness of the Security Council could be damaged if too many members were to make decision-making impossible.

How are we to direct our debates in our joint endeavour? The Security Council must be operational: once expanded, it cannot have more than some 20 members without losing in performance, agility and rapid reaction capability. Perhaps, in fact, in order to facilitate more frequent access to non-permanent seats by some United Nations Members, especially those who wish to invoke Article 23 (1) —

> "due regard being specially paid, in the first instance to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution" —

we should delete the part of Article 23 (2) which states that: "A retiring member shall not be eligible for immediate re-election".

The veto is an historic witness to the Second World War, but it is also an indicator of the balance of force and power which is hard to ignore. Even though it is used less than before, it is still at issue in the debate in the framework of Security Council reform, on which it seems difficult to arrive at a consensus. Obviously, if we reach agreement only on increasing non-permanent members, this question will no longer be so urgent. But if, on the contrary, we opt to enlarge the group of permanent members, we will also have to see whether these new States will also be given Council status including the right of veto. This, it would seem to me, requires further in-depth thought. Some States have already given their sometimes opposing positions in this regard.

One delegation at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, and in San Francisco, suggested, according to Sydney Bailey, that the United Nations Charter should specify that, in electing non-permanent members to the Council, special attention should be paid to military contributions made by States for the maintenance of international peace and security. Military and other contributions made by States are important and should be rewarded and acknowledged, especially for the maintenance of peace where men and women risk their lives in areas of conflict. Nevertheless, States with less military capacity would also have a role to play in an enlarged Security Council, if necessary. Indeed, some small countries, because of their history, are well acquainted with the art of compromise and negotiation, and can bring to the Council a different world view and different diplomatic skills, which are all quite necessary to face the new post-cold war situation. Bailey reminds us also that representatives of permanent members of the Council do not necessarily have more influence than representatives of non-permanent members:

*(spoke in English)*

> "I would stress that non-permanent members have sometimes played a decisive role, and their representatives may win high esteem because of personal qualities of courtesy, persistence and integrity" (*Bailey, S.*, the Procedure of the United Nations Security Council, *second edition, Oxford, 1988, p. 110)*

*(spoke in French)*

I see in the reform of the Security Council new and credible possibilities for seats for small States whose impartiality and the nature of whose diplomacy might breathe new energy and creativity into the resolution of conflicts entrusted to the good offices of the Council.

The Principality of Andorra would like the United Nations to be the standard-bearer of human solidarity — an effective Organization, respected around the globe, an Organization of which the citizens of the world can be proud. The reform process we have begun should help to project this image and to restore the confidence of our citizens in the validity of the Organization. In the case of Security Council reform, our major goal is an effective Council adapted to the needs of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace; a Council that acts rather than reacts; a Council that interacts with the rest of the United Nations, which would have even closer links with the General Assembly pursuant to the principles of transparency and forthright cooperation.

**Mr. Mahugu** (Kenya): The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has engaged this Organization since three years ago, when the Open-ended Working Group was established to consider the matter. Considerable time and energy have been spent in the inter-sessional periods with a view to coming up with a workable consensus agreement. The delegation of Kenya considers this to be a very important task, and has therefore played an active role in all the meetings, formal and informal, with the expectation that an agreement would soon be reached on all the issues.

In his address to the General Assembly early this month, the Foreign Minister of Kenya called for the reform of the Security Council to reflect the principles of democracy, transparency and equitable representation. He also appealed to all Member States to exercise greater flexibility on the various positions they had taken so far, in order to reach an early consensus. I wish to reiterate that appeal. We are of the view that it is high time that agreement was reached on this matter.

In this regard, I recall the positions presented to the Working Group by the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as by the African group. As an active member of those two groups, I can only but reiterate the position already eloquently and succinctly presented to the Working

Group by the groups, both of which have presented concrete proposals.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Working Group, contained in document A/50/47, and its annexes, contained in document A/50/47/Add.1. It is evident from that report, that the Working Group has covered considerable ground, particularly on the following specific issues: expansion of the permanent membership; expansion of the non-permanent membership; curtailment of the veto; improvement of the working methods of the Council; and other matters, including the question of periodic reviews. From the report, it is clear that the notion of the "quick fix" has been rejected. An agreement should be reached addressing the imbalance that now prevails.

The Security Council, as now constituted, is not representative, but is a product of the situation which obtained after the Second World War. Indeed, it is an arrangement that was designed to avoid another war and to achieve a balance of power during the cold war. The conduct of international power relations is now characterized by consensus and consultation, and the concept of sovereign equality has received universal recognition.

The question of the distribution of permanent and non-permanent seats must be reconsidered in view of the important role that the Security Council continues to play in international peace and security, taking into account that most conflicts are now concentrated in developing countries. There is no more justification for the continuation of a situation in which at least two continents are not represented in the permanent membership. In this regard, Africa has made a case for at least two permanent seats in the Council. There is also a need to address the question of an expansion of the non-permanent membership to give greater meaning to equitable geographical distribution.

In order to agree on the distribution of seats, it is important that agreement be reached on the overall size of the Council. The figure of 25 is the very minimum that would ensure equitable distribution. This is the only way that could enable us to address the existing imbalance in the Council, where four out of five permanent members now present virtually the same form of civilization. There is no more justification for Africa and Latin American and the Caribbean not being represented in the permanent membership. The African common position makes it clear that seats allocated to the regional groups should be subject to nomination by their respective regions for eventual election by the General Assembly.

We are of the considered opinion that members of the Security Council must, individually and collectively, act in the collective interest of international peace and security and not on the basis of their own narrow national interests. The principle of regional seats would, in our view, go a long way towards ensuring this.

Whereas it is imperative that consideration be given to a country's contribution to international peace and security, we are of the view that a criterion based purely on factors such as the size, power, population or even wealth of a nation would be flawed since none of these factors is static. The new arrangements must therefore have the intrinsic capacity to be regularly reviewed to reflect the changing realities of international power relations.

On the question of the veto, we have noted the reluctance of some members to accept any changes regarding either its elimination or the curtailment of its use. The veto power may have had a justification during the cold-war era. However, with the emergence of the new international order, characterized by increased consultations and consensus, the prolongation of such power and privilege can no longer be justified. My delegation sincerely hopes that an agreement will be reached at least on the limitation of the use or threat of use of the veto, along the following lines: restricted use under Chapter VII of the Charter; a requirement that at least two members be required to enforce the veto; and an enumeration of issues on which the veto cannot apply. Although the use of the veto has been minimized since the end of the cold war, there is no doubt that the threat of the use of the veto has made it impossible for States Members of the Organization to engage in a meaningful dialogue on some issues of grave importance. The use or the threat of use of the veto creates an atmosphere in which it is difficult to reach a consensus on such issues. My delegation continues to hold the view that the veto is a negative instrument which cannot play a useful role in decision-making in the prevailing international atmosphere.

Finally, my delegation welcomes the commendable efforts that the Security Council has recently initiated to improve its working methods and decision-making process. These steps have gone a long way not only towards improving transparency but also towards ensuring the legitimacy of the Council's decisions. We

therefore call for the formalization of these measures through an amendment to the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council as well as to the relevant sections of the Charter. We are of the view that these steps could be taken while the Working Group continues to be seized of the other, more complicated, questions.

My delegation will continue to work closely with the President of the General Assembly and with other delegations as we grapple with these important issues. We are confident that we shall benefit immensely from Ambassador Razali's wide experience and well-known skills as a consensus-seeker and consensus-builder.

**Mr. Petrella** (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: First, I wish to convey my appreciation to the co-Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group whose report we are considering today. Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Jayanama of Thailand have met the great responsibility of providing us with a valuable and solid document.

This document has led me to some very general reflections which I believe it useful to share. To begin with, I believe that there continues to be an interest among those of us who participated in the work of that Group in increasing the membership of the Security Council. I also believe — and this is very important — that we all consider that the Council should improve its working methods in order to increase its transparency. That would be the best way to move towards greater efficiency, representation of legitimacy in its decisions.

It also seems quite clear that the initial optimism that rapid decisions would be possible has vanished since the idea of expanding the Council was put forward at the beginning of this decade. We note today that Council reform is not a simple linear exercise that involves seeking specific opinions on who will be members of the new Council, how many new members there will be, for how long and with what powers. The matter in fact goes much deeper than this. Thanks to the work of the Working Group and to its wise leadership, we have realized this in time. This is a complex matter because it is not a question of changing the composition of a principal organ of the United Nations simply because some of us wish to do so, or because it seemed the right thing to do on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary. The question at hand is to find acceptable mechanisms to overcome the crisis of the Organization and to provide the Organization with the tools that will enable it successfully to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The crisis of the Organization is not, as one hears, strictly financial in nature, because all those of us who owe money and who make significant contributions to the budget will, in the end, pay our contributions. Nor does the crisis of the United Nations necessarily stem from antiquated structures, because these structures have been undergoing change.

The real crisis of our Organization is a crisis in the multilateral spirit, a crisis in the spirit of collective action. It was this spirit which, in order to put an end to arrangements among the few and to mistrust, led to the establishment of the League of Nations, which in 1945 gave way to the United Nations. And it is this spirit which, unfortunately, may be disappearing today. This has led to a crisis in participation, especially among the smallest countries.

The crisis is reflected in the secret and exclusionary methods that the Security Council has practised ever since the mid-1980s. The Security Council has become an organ many of whose deliberations are neither followed nor witnessed by Member States, nor explained thoroughly after the fact.

This is particularly sensitive for countries with smaller delegations — in other words, those that represent smaller countries. Such countries constitute the vast majority of the Members of the United Nations. In general, these countries can least influence the processes in which the Security Council is involved.

In this respect we should ask how many times this majority of countries is consulted or informed when there is no urgent vote in the Assembly. This is what I would term a crisis of participation; it is the most important crisis, because it weakens the multilateral system at its roots.

It follows that we who form the majority would like to see, as a condition of any reform, greater transparency and wider participation in the Security Council. We certainly all wish that the changes will put an end to unnecessary secrecy, exclusion, delays in distributing information and the fact that it is impossible for us to participate. Listening to the presentation of reports and forming our own opinions, for example, is a useful way of participating which would not affect confidential private consultations. Such consultations have always existed, and will continue to do so, because they are a necessary part of any negotiating process.

In this context, I believe that it would be useful to recall the comments of Mr. Alain Juppé, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France — a permanent member of the Security Council and a founding Member of the United Nations — in document A/49/667 of 11 November 1994. His comments are in line with ours. This document states, *inter alia*:

> "In his statement to the General Assembly, Mr. Alain Juppé ... expressed the wish for the Security Council to increase its reliance on public debate in reaching its decisions". (*A/49/667, p. 1*)

I also wish to emphasize the comments, made in a similar vein, of the distinguished African representative, Ambassador Simbarashe Simbanenduku Mumbengegwi of Zimbabwe. On 31 March 1992, in the Security Council itself, he stated:

> "Finally, this 15-member Council acts on behalf of a total of 175 States Members of the United Nations. This means that 160 States have placed their security, and possibly their very survival, in the hands of the 15. This is a solemn and heavy responsibility that each and every member of the Council carries. It is therefore of crucial importance that every decision taken by the Security Council be able to withstand the careful scrutiny of the 160 Member States on whose behalf the Council is expected to act." (*S/PV.3063, p. 54-55*)

What we all, without exception, wish for is a Security Council that is forward-looking and does not fall back into the structures of the past. Those structures were the result of wars, and as such no discussion or consultation took place on them. That was in the past. With the end of the cold war and the dissolution of East-West antagonism, that past, fortunately, has come to an end.

Hence, we should not encourage further unjustified elitism. Today we must look towards the future. The Working Group must guide the Assembly and the Council. To a certain extent, and for this reason, the mandate of the Group is of such overriding importance that it should not be set aside. Perhaps this fact was not duly realized.

When we consider the Council's agenda over the past few years, we see that the main conflicts with which it has been dealing have taken place within, rather than between countries. Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali made that clear in his annual report on the work of the Organization. For us, this means that the Council must also deal with emergency situations for civilian populations, propose humanitarian measures, punish terrorism, promote specific cases of disarmament and even help with social issues and matters relating to development and political organization within countries in conflict.

In today's world the concept of a threat to peace is not the same as it was in 1945 or 1964. This has resulted in the Council's novel, though debatable, interpretation of Chapter VII of the Charter. It has also resulted in development being considered part of that broad concept of peace, an idea that has been supported by the non-aligned countries and the countries of Latin America. We must accept the fact that we have made progress, and that our parameters today are more demanding than those of the past.

My participation in the debates of this Assembly began only recently, but I must confess that discussing the expansion of the Security Council as we have been doing seems somewhat frustrating. It is frustrating and worrying that the majority of the Members of the United Nations could believe that this discussion is ultimately of interest only to a minority. I also believe that it is frustrating constantly to discuss formulas that permanently exclude countries that have made valuable and proven contributions to the collective tasks of the Organization for many years and which, furthermore, are among the main contributors to the Organization. Such formulas, coming after three years of work, are not realistic and are probably one of the causes of the deadlock. If these formulas are not acceptable, we should not, for the present, insist on them.

It is also worrying to hear it said that, in the end, a package will have to be negotiated. What package? It is not as though the changes required in other areas of the United Nations, which are truly urgent, cannot follow their course while the enlargement of the Council is still under discussion.

The impression of the public and parliaments of many countries is that the Organization needs to be restructured so as to be less of a burden and to help ensure good governance and development. The question of the expansion of the Council as viewed so far is not so urgent.

It has been hinted that the Council needs to be expanded because this would help relieve the deficit. This argument is not even worth considering.

In the light of and despite all we have heard, we can carry on discussing the matter as we have done to date, but let us not forget that this is not a constructive debate because it is deeply divisive for regions, the only basis on which any kind of representation could be founded. On the contrary, I believe that we could make a more in-depth analysis of the host of proposals not based on exclusionary criteria.

The Council's current agenda and worldwide trends call for broader-based formulas. In my view, we need a Council with bona fide members politically motivated to face the new agendas with time-tested convictions.

**Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla** (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The agenda item on equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters is one of the most significant and important on the agenda of the General Assembly. That has been made by the numerous references to the need to reform and democratize the Security Council made during the recent general debate and by the long list of speakers for today's debate.

For our delegation, the necessary restructuring of the Security Council involves the expansion of the number of its permanent and non-permanent members, the application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution and the introduction of reforms that ensure democracy and transparency in its work on the basis of the Council's procedures and authority being in accordance with the powers granted under the Charter.

In this comprehensive process of reforms, it is also paramount to revitalize the General Assembly and to rehabilitate the essential links between it and the Council. This would enable the sole universal organ of the United Nations fully to exercise its authority, including the right to remain duly informed of the Council's activities and decisions and to make the recommendations it deems necessary, since the Council acts as a representative of and at the behest of all the Member States.

At the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, the Cuban delegation participated with interest, flexibility and respect for the opinions of others in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform. Many variables emerged or were reiterated during the negotiations and the positions expressed by countries and regional groups varied greatly, which has turned this Working Group into a broad-based and complex forum. Logically, the search for consensus on critical issues of universal interest is a process that demands flexibility and time. It is only natural that it be controversial or sometimes seem too slow or contradictory, but it is the only democratic and sure way to find better solutions that have had time to mature and can be shared by all. In our opinion, this scenario is reflected to a great extent in the report the Working Group submitted to the General Assembly.

In this connection, the Cuban delegation wishes in particular to acknowledge the active presidency of Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral and the laudable and tireless work of the Vice-Presidents of the Working Group, the Permanent Representatives of Finland, Mr. Breitenstein, and of Thailand, Mr. Jayanama, whose efforts and patience we highly appreciate.

As a result of the negotiations on this item, Member States have been able to identify trends, priorities and aspects without which it would not be possible to create a solid consensus to keep us from hasty and artificial solutions.

Our delegation, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, endorsed and reiterates a motto that is widely supported today: It is necessary objectively to evaluate the direct historical relationship between the diversity and number of Security Council members and the Organization's membership.

More than 50 years after its inception, the United Nations has changed radically. The remarkable increase in the number and diversity of its Members, which aspire to participate equitably in all the bodies and spheres of activity of the Organization, is in our opinion one of the essential bases of the reform process in the Security Council.

The strict application of the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be the cornerstone of Security Council expansion, because it is the only genuine way to ensure the necessary representative and democratic nature, transparency and effectiveness of that organ.

Any formula that excludes the interests of developing countries from this process would be counterproductive, because the main imbalance to be redressed in the composition of the Security Council is, in fact, the underrepresentation of developing countries. We recognize that this is not the only element to be considered, but it is certainly the most important.

We have studied with profound interest and attention every proposal submitted to the Working Group on the increase of the number of permanent and non-permanent members, as well as the options for a more frequent rotation of non-permanent seats. The Working Group's deliberations have shown that a significant number of Member States do not support the establishment of so-called permanent seats, an option that, regrettably, would always be discriminatory and selective in and of itself and in relation to the permanent members, and would never ensure the representation deserved and desired by the developing world, at least so long as the category of permanent membership continues to exist.

With regard to the democratization, transparency and review of the Council's working methods and procedures, the Working Group examined many objective and comprehensive proposals, including those submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement.

We acknowledge with pleasure that, in the past few years, in response to the repeated demands of the Organization's Member States, which the Security Council represents and is accountable to, some measures have been implemented, which we welcomed with satisfaction, aimed at improving the transparency of the mechanisms and decision-making process of the Council. However, such measures will only be effective when they are institutionalized once and for all. In this respect, our delegation endorses the criterion that the process of institutionalization must be implemented de facto through the adoption of the final rules of procedure of the Security Council and a thorough revision of the relevant provisions of the Charter.

The veto issue has also been the subject of substantive deliberations. In recent times the Security Council has adopted consensus decisions on the most diverse international issues and on core peacekeeping and international security matters. But there have been other decisions that have not been, nor should they be considered, expressions of real consensus in the Security Council. We cannot underestimate the enormous damage to the credibility of the United Nations and the Security Council caused by double standards in the latter's actions, often related to the principle or use of the veto.

The silent threat of the use of the veto continues to be an influential factor in some decisions and pronouncements of this body. Thus, our delegation stands for the complete elimination of the institution of the veto and, until then, at least a gradual restriction of that privilege.

The General Assembly and the Working Group can count on our delegation's constructive, flexible and modest contribution and its respect for the opinions of others. Cuba is deeply committed to the goals of an authentic and far-reaching reform of the Security Council, a reform guided by José Martí's formula: with everyone and for the good of everyone.

**Mr. Ruiz Pérez** (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for me to address the Assembly, on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), on the agenda item before us. The Non-Aligned Movement has attached the utmost importance to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. The non-aligned countries have participated actively in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group since its establishment three years ago.

On various occasions the Movement has expressed its position on the matters under consideration by the Working Group. During the deliberations of the General Assembly last year, we presented the decisions adopted on these matters at the Eleventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cartagena in October 1995.

The Non-Aligned Movement has stressed the urgent need to democratize the United Nations in a way that reflects the universal nature of the Organization and fulfils the principle of sovereign equality of States. The Non-Aligned Movement has pointed out the need for democracy and transparency in the work of the Security Council.

As expressed in the final communiqué of the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and heads of delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New York on 25 September last, in the framework of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly the Ministers and heads of delegation renewed their support for the proposal submitted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on 13 February 1995 to the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. They also expressed their support for the document entitled, "The question of the veto", also submitted to the Working Group by the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation wishes to reiterate, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, that the Movement will

continue to participate in the work of the Working Group in a constructive, concerted and active manner.

My delegation had the honour of reading the declaration issued by the Non-Aligned Movement on the item under consideration, and it has our full support. Allow me now to express the position of the Government of Colombia on the agenda item under consideration.

After three years of discussion by the Working Group, we have before us a report that goes beyond its predecessors and contains important substantive aspects. It is obvious, as the report shows, that, first, there is consensus within the Group on the expansion of the Security Council, the review of its working methods, the strengthening of its capacity and effectiveness, the enhancement of its representativeness and the improvement of its working efficiency.

Secondly, the work of reforming the Council should be based on the principles of sovereign equality of all Members of the United Nations, equitable geographical distribution and contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as to the other purposes of the Organization.

Thirdly, in that context, the concepts of transparency, legitimacy, efficiency and democracy should be taken into account.

Regarding the working methods of the Security Council, the report properly reflects what has been expressed by a large number of delegations regarding the need for the Security Council to improve its working methods and transparency in the light of experience gained on issues such as the reports of the Council to the General Assembly; briefings to States non-members of the Council; consultations with current and potential troop-contributing countries; the effective flow of information and exchange of views between the Council and the Assembly; and the participation of countries non-members of the Council in its debates, as set forth in Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter.

The report also reflects the wide support for the proposals on working methods submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, and those submitted by Argentina and New Zealand which, as has been stated on various occasions, are entirely complementary.

With respect to the size and composition of the Security Council, the report shows a clear reaffirmation of the agreement existing on the need to expand the membership of the Security Council while ensuring equitable geographical distributions, in the light of the substantial increase in the membership of the United Nations, especially in terms of developing countries.

The report also emphasizes the wide support for the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement that, should no consensus be reached on other categories of membership, the increase in the number of members should for the time being take place only in the category of non-permanent members. Support for this position not only included that of the 113 members of the Non-Aligned Movement, but also that of a considerable number of other countries that are not members of the Movement.

With regard to the adoption of decisions in the Security Council, including the question of the veto, the report reflects the proposal of the Non-Aligned Movement — which is also supported by a large number of non-member countries — to limit and rationalize the veto through an amendment to the Charter establishing as a first step that the veto be applicable only to actions undertaken under Chapter VII of the Charter. Other proposals on the matter submitted by Mexico and Uruguay received special consideration and support in the deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group.

Colombia has opposed the veto power ever since the San Francisco Conference, which it considers to be contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. Maintenance of the veto power also runs contrary to the aim of democratization shared by an overwhelming majority of Member States of this Organization.

The Non-Aligned Movement, in its document of 13 February 1995, indicated that the veto power, which guarantees an exclusive and dominant role to the permanent members of the Council, is contrary to the aim of democratizing the United Nations and therefore must be reviewed.

Since we are unable to eliminate the veto power in the current circumstances we should, at least as a provisional measure, define and limit its scope of application, while bearing constantly in mind that only its complete elimination will permit the full exercise of democracy in the Security Council.

For this reason, we resolutely support the document submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement regarding the question of the veto, which responds to the need for limiting the veto with a view to its elimination.

*The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.*